

FELSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 15 July 2019 at 5.00 pm in the United Reformed Church Hall, Committee Room.

- Present** Councillors John Moore (Chairman), Alan Mackrill and Frances Marshall.
- F19/08 **Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**
Apologies had been received from Cllrs Graham Harvey and Peter Rose. Cllr John Moore declared a prejudicial interest in Item F19/13 relating to Felsted Friendship Club and took no part in the discussion regarding that particular donation.
- F19/09 **Minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2019**
The Minutes of the meeting were agreed and were signed by the Chairman.
- F19/10 **Matters arising from the June meeting**
10.1 Woodleys Car Park resurfacing (Item F19/03.2) – The planned meeting between the Clerk, Cllr Graham Harvey and Ted Anderson was being arranged to discuss the remedial work options further.
10.2 Asset Register land values (Item F19/03.4) – Members noted that the adjustment to the Nature Area land value to £120,000 had been confirmed at the June full Council meeting (see Item 19/114.4).
- F19/11 **Bank Reconciliation and PAYE records**
The Chairman signed the Bank Reconciliations and PAYE records for May and June 2019. The Chairman also noted the current balance in the Metro Bank account for the Nature Area funds.
- F19/12 **Consideration of the Internal Auditors Interim Report**
Members studied the Report in detail and the Clerk provided an update on the recommendations contained in the Report:
a) **Payments to HMRC for PAYE and National Insurance** – The Clerk had contacted Fisher-Michael and they had confirmed that they had incorrectly applied Employment Allowance to the payments since they took over the payroll administration. As a result an underpayment of £701.85 had occurred in 2018-19 plus a further underpayment of £231.42 for the period April-July 2019. Fisher-Michael offered, in the circumstances, to pay any penalty or interest imposed by HMRC on this late payment. It was unanimously agreed that the amounts owing should be paid to HMRC by cheques signed at the August PC meeting.
b) **Trial Balance at 31 March 2019 / Asset register** – The Clerk confirmed that the equity balances shown on the Trail Balance and the AGAR figures now agreed following a correction to the recorded VAT totals. The Clerk also confirmed that the Asset Register and Insurance values now agreed
c) **The year end timetable was confirmed for 2019-2020** - With no local council elections taking place in 2020 it was agreed to revert to the previous timetable of approving the Audit Return at the May PC meeting.
d) **Review of Quickbooks accounting arrangements** - As part of the recent Staff Appraisal process it had been agreed to arrange training on Quickbooks for the Clerk. The system would be reviewed following the training to assess if Quickbooks could continue to adequately record the Council's current transaction pattern.
e) **Review of the Nature Area accounts processes and drafting of financial policies relating to internal account transfers** – Members agreed that this matter should initially be referred for consideration at the September Nature Area Working Group meeting and then be considered further at the next Finance Committee meeting.
- F19/13 **Consideration of 2019-20 Schedule of Donations**
Members studied the Donation List prepared by the Clerk and noted that in addition to the £1200 initially allocated for donations in 2018-19, three further donations (two relating to the Armistice Centenary event totalling £250 and the third for the Art Competition prizes at £200) had also been made.

Members reviewed the Council's donation policy and concluded that no changes were required. Bearing the policy in mind it was agreed to approve donations as follows for 2019-20: Felsted Friendship Club £300 (Cllr John Moore took no part in the discussion of this donation - see Item F19/08 above), Herts and Essex Air Ambulance £225, Uttlesford Citizen's Advise Bureau £200, East Anglian Children's Hospital (EACH) £200, Felsted Primary School Art Competition prizes £200 and Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal £75 . TOTAL £1200. It was also agreed to set aside a contingency of £250 towards possible donations to any events organised to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of V E Day in May 2020.

F19/14 **Review of accounts for the current year to date** Members studied the Budget Comparison prepared by the Clerk. They agreed the following changes to the 2019-20 Proposed Budget:

14.1 Receipts

The 'Grants' figure was amended to NIL

14.2 Payments

- 'HMRC Tax and NI' amended to £3000 (see Item F19/12a above)
- 'Membership and Subscriptions' increased to £1000 to cover inflation
- 'Printing' figure was reduced to NIL as a Newsletter was unlikely to be produced this year
- 'Telephone/Broadband' increased to £750 to cover inflation
- 'Professional Fees' figure was amended to NIL as no fees were expected in the current year
- 'Advertising' figure was reduced to NIL as none was anticipated
- 'Hire of halls' increased to £100 to cover increased use of the Memorial Hall
- 'Hedgecutting/Tree maintenance' increased to £2750 to cover inflation
- 'Play equipment repairs' increased to £5000 to cover expected refurbishment costs
- 'Pavilion and MUGA electricity' increased to £350 and £450 respectively to cover inflation
- 'Village Attendant' increased to £7000 to cover inflation
- 'Village Car Park' increased to £2500 to cover cost of remedial works
- 'Playpark' amended to £2500 to reflect latest costings
- 'Donations' increased to £1450 (see Item F19/13 above)

The above amendments would result in Proposed Receipts of £72,400 and Proposed Payments of £98,480. Members noted the £26,080 deficit which would reduce the Council's reserves to a more usual level, in the region of £125,000.

F19/15 **Disaster Recovery policy**

In the absence of Cllr Graham Harvey it was agreed to consider this at the next meeting.

F19/16 **Urgent matters and proposals for future Agenda items**

16.1 Staff appraisals – Financial implications - Cllr Frances Marshall reported that staff appraisals had recently been completed for the Clerk and Asst Clerk. It was noted that both officers were regularly working more than their contracted hours in order to complete their workload. Going forward the Clerk had expressed a desire to reduce her contracted hours in advance of her likely retirement in October 2020. The HR Committee had therefore concluded that a re-organisation of the Council's administrative affairs would be required and it was suggested that the first step could be the appointment of a separate RFO.

The Clerk agreed to research the average salary point for an RFO and it was agreed that this matter would be placed on the Agenda for consideration at the August full Council meeting.

16.2 Bank cheque signatories - Members noted that Cllr John Moore and the Clerk had been in contact with Barclays Bank and had arranged for the necessary paperwork to be prepared to enable Chris Woodhouse to be removed from the signatory list and Cllr Alan Mackrill to be added. Once signed this would be returned to Barclays Bank for the changes to be implemented.

16.3 Nature Area Deposit account – Cllr John Moore and the Clerk had been in contact with Barclays Bank and arranged for a Client's Premium Account to be opened. This would pay an

interest rate of 0.2% paid quarterly into the account. Signatories would mirror those on the existing Barclays Community Account as amended at F19/16.2 above (2 of 3 required to authorise transactions).

F19/17

Next meeting

The meeting closed at 6.17 pm.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 9 October at 5.00pm

..... Chairman

9 October 2019